

## Class Distinctions in England

A Case of Ostracism Observed by an American Woman in County Society

If there is one thing more than another that excites the surprise of an American living in England it is the rigid class lines and prejudices which still obtain in county society.

Gay London is far too cosmopolitan, and is too keen after money and amusement to draw sharp distinctions even if King Edward had not broken through certain time honored rules and regulations. He is notorious for letting down barriers where great wealth is concerned, and it is well known that he looks at the bank account rather than the pedigree of those who are blessed by the light of his countenance.

But while the great world revolves about the throne it is not the least of the royal family's attitude toward social questions has little weight in the provinces, or among the old conservative set. There the time honored conventions of centuries are still supreme.

For example, not so very long ago the wife of a well known London publisher, who cherished ambitions of social distinction, begged a friend of hers for an introduction to the Governor of the Tower. Now, as it happened, the Governor at that moment was very much of a personage, and the friend gently but none the less decidedly refused to grant Mrs. Publisher's request.

To a third party it was explained that to yield the favor would have been a real kindness. The personage it seems, was decidedly old fashioned, and upon finding out that the lady's husband made books for a living would unquestionably have asked why the devil such people were forced upon him, and have taken the first opportunity to give them the snub aristocratic.

But to see the ancient cast iron system at work in all of its glory one should go to a shire like Lincolnshire, where the county society in the British Isles are to be found. There they would scorn to yield an inch to the newly rich, be the gift a foot thick, and every petty prejudice and social obstacle of medieval days is preserved intact.

I remember quite well my utter astonishment when first brought into contact with such heavy traditions. It was during a summer spent in a district thickly dotted with rich manor houses, halls, courts, and stables.

The neighbors were delightfully friendly, and after a call from the vicar and undergoing a satisfactory inspection at church one Sunday we were accepted in whole hearted fashion by the best of county society. The clergy of four parishes left cards, and we were promptly invited to at least a dozen garden parties.

Among the natives there could be no question that a certain Mr. X— and his wife were the most distinguished looking and agreeable people in the place. He was a beauty of the English type, so tall and athletic, so freshly tinted and finely featured, and then he dressed with a perfection of color and cut one sees only among men of his nation.

This couple occupied a stately seat near by, had wonderful gardens, made a cult of birds and flowers, bred superb cattle and were noted for their kindness to the cottage folk. I first met them in an industrial movement designed to elevate the peasantry and was greatly surprised never to encounter them again in any of the neighboring drawing rooms.

In fact I was so disappointed that I made inquiries, declaring my intention of hunting them up, trying to exchange visits and asked the advice of a local magnate as to the arrangement of a dinner I wanted to give later on which would include the attractive husband and wife.

"What, the X's?" he exclaimed. "Why, my dear lady, you surely have no intention of meeting such people on a dinner footing?"

"But why not?" I inquired. "They are far and away the most amusing man and woman about here, and I am simply dying to be asked to see their aviary and orchid houses."

The Colonel replied rather stiffly that if I adhered to my rash course I might be sure none of the county people could be induced to accept my invitation, and he entreated me to desist from such a social blunder. Instantly concluded that, some deadly disgrace was involved and begged to hear the story and judge for myself.

Then with that complete absence of humor and the solemn precision of his race my military friend explained. He said that poor Mrs. X was of irreproachable birth and morals, but the community had been compelled to ostracize her on account of her deplorable marriage.

I observed that now we would come to the black story of ignominy and crime. Ignoring my flimsy plea, the Colonel stated that the wretched Mr. X was not only the son of a farmer, but—here he stared like a horned owl through his glasses—X was proprietor of the chief auction mart in Lincoln where the greatest cattle fairs of England are held weekly throughout the year.

"Well, and what of that?" I inquired. "But, my dear madam!" exclaimed that good, dull Britisher, "can't you see how hopeless it is having to do with such a creature? It is deplorable that a woman of Mrs. X's gentle blood should so utterly forget the obligations of her class. Yet, if she is dead to all sense of decency, we hold it in our hands to protect the society of Lincolnshire against this sort of contamination."

I then became interested to inquire how such prejudices work out, and asked a series of questions as to the status of Mrs. X, with her immediate family.

It appears she was one of five maiden and orphaned daughters of a clergyman, living a mean niggling little life on cheese parings and candle ends. Big, good looking X, courted her kiddily; she loved him and they were married in a very storm of approbrium and reproach.

The Colonel told with disapproval of her being now allowed to visit her invalid mother once a month, but added that all the rest of the family made it a point to be absent on such occasions. Her old friends she only met at church and on charity bazaar, where bows were exchanged, that being the extent of her intercourse with her neighbors.

One cousin, so it seems, rebelling against the rigor of the law and hoping to effect some sort of reconciliation, invited the X's once to a lawn party. Happily or unhappily, these kindly attentions were not reciprocated, and before the afternoon came around, the entertainment was declared off, as every other man and woman

in the neighborhood sent in regrets. It was a horrible mortification to the X's, who had since then drawn completely apart.

"And what about the son," I wanted to know, having noticed a singularly attractive child with them at church.

My friend observed that the son was the main trouble. X was such a stupid, selfish brute that he utterly refused to try and save his boy.

The mother's family, it appears, offered to take the lad, give him their name to bring him up as their own—for a handsome money consideration—on condition that he have no further intercourse with his father, feeling, if some such precautions were taken, there was hope he might yet be a gentleman.

But no, always obstinate as a pig, X insisted upon keeping the child in his own class, and some said he did not mean to even send his son up for the army. That charge the Colonel refused to believe, for of course putting the youngster into a good regiment and giving him plenty of money to spend would certainly help matters.

"But," I summarized, "the best looking, cleverest, manliest man in this community is abhorred and thrown out like a criminal because he owns an auction mart and ranks with tradespeople."

"I notice he heads all your subscription lists for village improvement and church restoration, that he writes everybody's public speeches and really runs this entire shire even if it does seem a trifle odd."

"Well, now, will you, who are so keen on social distinctions, explain to me why the same people who refuse to recognize the X's will grovel before an American nobody married to an English earl?" We constantly send over the sum of our country—rich circles, I grant you—and it is welcomed in circles of English society it could never hope to penetrate in the United States.

Tell me what it means, for I am often confused over here at the constant talk of class honor, class obligations, pride of birth, &c., and yet watch you take Yankee vulgarisms to your bosom with rapturous enthusiasm."

"At this tirade the Colonel blushed like a girl and stammered and stammered so violently that I declared he was trying to cover up his ignorance."

"You don't know why," I leered. "Oh, yes, but I do," he insisted, "only we are such good friends it never would do for me to tell you."

I assured and reassured him that no matter what the explanation might be I promised to be neither injured nor angered. Even then he had to be coaxed, and my curiosity reached high pressure long before he could be induced to make clear the difference existing between an underbred Briton and a Yankee to match.

Expressing his views as delicately as possible, the Colonel said that in the first place King Edward's pronounced penchant for Americans had done wonders to advance them socially. The King had made them fashionable, and always turned a deaf ear when any one tried to criticize Uncle Sam's offspring.

Explained by the way that it was one cause of colonial bitterness that Austrians, Canadians, in fact overseas Britons generally, were invariably made to give place to the all conquering Yankee. "Colonialism" was recognized as a term of reproach as regards accent, dress, manners, &c., whereas the loudest voiced and most bizarre New Yorker or Chicagoan was accepted and applauded as "original."

"And, then," with an apprehensive air, "you see, we in England realize quite clearly that certain differentiations do exist in your countrymen. There are undoubtedly tall Americans and short Americans, Americans who are rich and Americans who are poor, and it is even said that some Yankees are sharper than others; but when it comes to a question of family, birth or social rank, dear lady, you are all of you simply Americans. Between what you call high class and low class the distinction is too subtle to be grasped by the British understanding. I myself fear it is an indeterminate quantity."

AN AMERICAN WOMAN.

BEGAN BY CORDING WOOD.

Start of W. C. Brown, Third Vice-President of the New York Central.

St. Louis, Mo., Feb. 18.—W. C. Brown, third vice-president of the New York Central and Hudson River Railroad, began his career in Sioux City thirty-five years ago, cording wood.

"I don't believe I want a soft snap, for if I am to stay in the railroad business I should know something about wooding engines. I would never know it by selling tickets at a window, assuring people that the clock is right and informing them how far it is to Berlin."

This was the remark made by Mr. Brown to James Hamilton, local agent of the Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, in 1869, as he was busy engaged in piling wood on an engine, for which he was receiving \$1.15 a day. Agent Hamilton had offered him a place in the station as an assistant, supposing that it would be a welcome change from piling wood on the engine in the yard, while the mercury kept under the zero mark. Then it was that Mr. Brown said he wanted no snap.

In accordance with his determination to learn everything there was to know about wooding engines Mr. Brown worked in the Sioux City yards during the winter of 1869. The next year he worked on the section and tamped on every tie in the section at one time or another. He afterward learned to sell tickets and be courteous to an inquisitive public.

To-day, sitting at his desk in the general offices of the New York Central Railroad, he recalls the winter of 1869 when he was cording wood in Sioux City and explains that it was the closest escape he ever had from the railroad.

He told Sioux City friends that he believed it was lucky for him that he did not fall into the habit of looking for snags.

Those in Sioux City who remember Mr. Brown do not recall him as a section man or a hostler, but as a messenger boy and collector in the office of Agent Hamilton, for in 1870 when he was 17, he went into the office to learn telegraphy, and incidentally did the collecting of freight bills for the agent to repay the latter for the trouble of giving him instruction on the key.

Mr. Brown's disposition to avoid snags evidently had much to do with his rise in the railroad world, for all his positions have demanded the most arduous work, and he has never avoided it.

## MME. SEMBRICH CHATS OF OUR OPERA AND SINGERS

Better Performances at the Metropolitan Than at Opera Houses in Germany—The Great Defect of American Singers—Few Roles Nowadays for the Light Soprano.

Stars are necessary to the best operatic performances in the opinion of Mme. Sembrich, who happens to be a star herself and therefore may be prejudiced in favor of the system. But they are necessary, she thinks, not so much on account of the comfort they get out of drawing large salaries as for the good of the public.

"It amuses me to hear German opera houses referred to as if they were the only places that supplied good music," Mme. Sembrich said to a *STANDARD* reporter. "As a matter of fact the singers at the Metropolitan are not equalled the world over."

"Of course they are stars for the most part. New Yorkers should be delighted that they are, even if it is possible for stars to sing only twice a week. That is the greatest difficulty for the manager who, like Mr. Conried, is ambitious to fill his company with the best artists in the world. Stars cannot sing, as the Germans do, two or three performances in succession."

"In German opera houses the women are engaged for five or ten years, and their public knows them. They may be good one night and not so good the next and it makes no difference. The people are devoted to their own singers, and they forgive them when they are not so good as they might be."

"But the situation is entirely different in New York. The women singers come here for a few months. They must keep themselves in the best possible condition, for the people who pay high prices come to the opera house expecting to hear the singers do their very best. For that reason it is necessary for us to keep in perfect vocal condition. That can only be done by singing not more than twice a week, and then with a certain period of rest between the performances."

"Besides, it rarely happens in Germany that a singer has to sing three severe roles in succession, whatever may be said to the contrary. If she sings, say *Brünnhilde* on one evening, she will probably have *Aennchen* in *Freischütz* or some such role the next."

"The New York public hears the best opera in the world and any attempt to make it more like opera in Germany would only damage it. There is much to be admired in German choruses, stage management and the artistic thoroughness of German operatic performances, and the orchestras are good. But the Metropolitan Opera House has nothing to envy in German singing."

Mme. Sembrich, who probably more than any other singer is asked for advice as to music study, told the *STANDARD* reporter that she had long ceased to recommend teachers, as so much depended on the pupil that it was impossible to tell what any teacher might do with a voice.

"I had the advantage of studying with both the Lampertis," Mme. Sembrich said, "and had instruction from the son before I took lessons from the father, who was very old when I met him. I had sung in this country before I ever saw the senior Lamperti."

"I was singing in Paris and he came to call on me. There was no talk then of my studying with him, and the only reference to the matter came when he said he wished that I had been his pupil."

"It happened that I was not well that next summer and took a long vacation. He had a cottage on Lake Como and we discovered to our surprise that the home of the senior Lamperti was very near ours."

"I studied with him all that summer. But before that time I had got my musical education from his son, who is teaching now in Berlin, where he has just gone to live after having been for years in Dresden."

It will interest American singers to hear what Mme. Sembrich said when she was asked what their greatest fault seemed to be.

"It is lack of the power to enunciate distinctly," she answered immediately, "and I have found it in many of them, even after they have studied for a long time. I don't know why it is, but that feature of singing seems to be neglected here."

"Enunciation is not a part of good singing that is to be acquired after everything else has been learned. It is a part of elementary singing itself and must be learned when the student begins. Good enunciation depends primarily on the placing of the voice. When that is bad, good enunciation is out of the question."

"I can understand English perfectly well—of course not so readily as an American, but I have no difficulty in realizing all that is said in German. The part of *Brünnhilde* which I have sung more than anything else, I have sung only in Italian. In all the Mozart operas which I have sung, with the exception of *Die Entführung*, I have sung both in Italian and German."

"The most curious experience I ever had with an opera from a linguistic point of view was in the case of *Le Fils du Regiment*, which is usually sung in Italian. I sang the part of *Marie* first in German at Kroll's in Berlin. Then I went to Monte Carlo and sang it there in French."

"I sang it again in Berlin in German and then I went to St. Petersburg, where I sang the part in Russian. I was very much surprised to find that the public did not make much difference, however, what tongue I sang in. The press and public declared that *Marie* was beyond my dignity, and I sang the part only a few times."

"Russians have very set ideas about comic and serious opera, and they do not

like to see their favorite of grand opera singing anything which they consider beneath their artistic dignity. So poor little *Marie* was not much appreciated in St. Petersburg."

"The difference in languages shows itself most in the differences in the vowel sounds on which the notes fall. If one is accustomed to singing on a sound like 'u' in one language, it is very difficult to change it to 'u' especially when one has got into the habit of singing one sound and has learned how to make the voice sound most beautiful on that vowel."

"Mme. Sembrich seems less inclined to have favorite roles than to have some that she especially abominates."

"The most uninteresting rôle in the whole repertoire is the one that I am singing so much just now," she said. "That is *Marguerite de Valois* in *Les Huguenots*. It is utterly unsympathetic to the singer, because she is not a living figure, but a puppet."

"So soon as the curtain rises she steps to the footlights and has to sing an extremely

difficult aria. There is no time to warm up the voice, and the music has no emotion in it to carry the singer along. Even *Marguerite* is more interesting for the second aria is at least intensely dramatic. Those two are, however, the least interesting rôles that fall to the lot of the coloratura soprano."

"She has a hard time nowadays, the coloratura soprano. She has not only to sing the most difficult music ever written, but she has to go directly against public taste."

"The old Italian operas are the only ones that give her a chance to display her art. But they have not been popular on their own account for years. Public taste has drifted away from them to the more dramatic works. Their revival, as it is always called now, depends altogether on the artists who sing them."

"I am very glad that I am not at the beginning of my career. It is a task for any singer to make her way in such operas now. When Patti sang first *Lucia* and *Traviata*, the operas were in their bloom, and even the Rossini operas were fresh in the favor of the public. The fate of the light soprano to-day is very different. She has to give these old works all the life they possess, and the other singers have to do the same."

"The composers have evidently no interest in the light soprano as a heroine. Puccini made it possible for her to sing *Mimi* in *La Bohème*, but he has not written another opera for her, but went off into dramatic heroines right away. Yet *Bohème* was the only opera written in years that was possible for her. When will somebody write another?"

learned it in, provided that the language itself is so well suited to singing. "The Mozart rôles that I sang first in German were the *Queen of the Zaire*, *Die Entführung* and the *Entführung aus dem Seraglio*. The parts of *Suzanna* and *Zerlina* I sang first in Italian, at Covent Garden. I once sang *Marguerite* in German, because the direction in Berlin had the idea that it would be delightful to have the opera given entirely in German. She had sung it in German, and I consented and regretted it before I had gone half the way through the opera."

"I have thus sung the same opera in three languages. *Romeo et Juliette* I have also sung in French and Italian. The *Queen in Les Huguenots* I have sung in Italian, French and German. The part of *Brünnhilde* which I have sung more than anything else, I have sung only in Italian. In all the Mozart operas which I have sung, with the exception of *Die Entführung*, I have sung both in Italian and German."

"The most curious experience I ever had with an opera from a linguistic point of view was in the case of *Le Fils du Regiment*, which is usually sung in Italian. I sang the part of *Marie* first in German at Kroll's in Berlin. Then I went to Monte Carlo and sang it there in French."

"I sang it again in Berlin in German and then I went to St. Petersburg, where I sang the part in Russian. I was very much surprised to find that the public did not make much difference, however, what tongue I sang in. The press and public declared that *Marie* was beyond my dignity, and I sang the part only a few times."

"Russians have very set ideas about comic and serious opera, and they do not

like to see their favorite of grand opera singing anything which they consider beneath their artistic dignity. So poor little *Marie* was not much appreciated in St. Petersburg."

"The difference in languages shows itself most in the differences in the vowel sounds on which the notes fall. If one is accustomed to singing on a sound like 'u' in one language, it is very difficult to change it to 'u' especially when one has got into the habit of singing one sound and has learned how to make the voice sound most beautiful on that vowel."

"Mme. Sembrich seems less inclined to have favorite rôles than to have some that she especially abominates."

"The most uninteresting rôle in the whole repertoire is the one that I am singing so much just now," she said. "That is *Marguerite de Valois* in *Les Huguenots*. It is utterly unsympathetic to the singer, because she is not a living figure, but a puppet."

"So soon as the curtain rises she steps to the footlights and has to sing an extremely

difficult aria. There is no time to warm up the voice, and the music has no emotion in it to carry the singer along. Even *Marguerite* is more interesting for the second aria is at least intensely dramatic. Those two are, however, the least interesting rôles that fall to the lot of the coloratura soprano."

"She has a hard time nowadays, the coloratura soprano. She has not only to sing the most difficult music ever written, but she has to go directly against public taste."

"The old Italian operas are the only ones that give her a chance to display her art. But they have not been popular on their own account for years. Public taste has drifted away from them to the more dramatic works. Their revival, as it is always called now, depends altogether on the artists who sing them."

"I am very glad that I am not at the beginning of my career. It is a task for any singer to make her way in such operas now. When Patti sang first *Lucia* and *Traviata*, the operas were in their bloom, and even the Rossini operas were fresh in the favor of the public. The fate of the light soprano to-day is very different. She has to give these old works all the life they possess, and the other singers have to do the same."

"The composers have evidently no interest in the light soprano as a heroine. Puccini made it possible for her to sing *Mimi* in *La Bohème*, but he has not written another opera for her, but went off into dramatic heroines right away. Yet *Bohème* was the only opera written in years that was possible for her. When will somebody write another?"

learned it in, provided that the language itself is so well suited to singing. "The Mozart rôles that I sang first in German were the *Queen of the Zaire*, *Die Entführung* and the *Entführung aus dem Seraglio*. The parts of *Suzanna* and *Zerlina* I sang first in Italian, at Covent Garden. I once sang *Marguerite* in German, because the direction in Berlin had the idea that it would be delightful to have the opera given entirely in German. She had sung it in German, and I consented and regretted it before I had gone half the way through the opera."

"I have thus sung the same opera in three languages. *Romeo et Juliette* I have also sung in French and Italian. The *Queen in Les Huguenots* I have sung in Italian, French and German. The part of *Brünnhilde* which I have sung more than anything else, I have sung only in Italian. In all the Mozart operas which I have sung, with the exception of *Die Entführung*, I have sung both in Italian and German."

"The most curious experience I ever had with an opera from a linguistic point of view was in the case of *Le Fils du Regiment*, which is usually sung in Italian. I sang the part of *Marie* first in German at Kroll's in Berlin. Then I went to Monte Carlo and sang it there in French."

"I sang it again in Berlin in German and then I went to St. Petersburg, where I sang the part in Russian. I was very much surprised to find that the public did not make much difference, however, what tongue I sang in. The press and public declared that *Marie* was beyond my dignity, and I sang the part only a few times."

"Russians have very set ideas about comic and serious opera, and they do not

like to see their favorite of grand opera singing anything which they consider beneath their artistic dignity. So poor little *Marie* was not much appreciated in St. Petersburg."

"The difference in languages shows itself most in the differences in the vowel sounds on which the notes fall. If one is accustomed to singing on a sound like 'u' in one language, it is very difficult to change it to 'u' especially when one has got into the habit of singing one sound and has learned how to make the voice sound most beautiful on that vowel."

"Mme. Sembrich seems less inclined to have favorite rôles than to have some that she especially abominates."

"The most uninteresting rôle in the whole repertoire is the one that I am singing so much just now," she said. "That is *Marguerite de Valois* in *Les Huguenots*. It is utterly unsympathetic to the singer, because she is not a living figure, but a puppet."

"So soon as the curtain rises she steps to the footlights and has to sing an extremely

difficult aria. There is no time to warm up the voice, and the music has no emotion in it to carry the singer along. Even *Marguerite* is more interesting for the second aria is at least intensely dramatic. Those two are, however, the least interesting rôles that fall to the lot of the coloratura soprano."

"She has a hard time nowadays, the coloratura soprano. She has not only to sing the most difficult music ever written, but she has to go directly against public taste."

"The old Italian operas are the only ones that give her a chance to display her art. But they have not been popular on their own account for years. Public taste has drifted away from them to the more dramatic works. Their revival, as it is always called now, depends altogether on the artists who sing them."

"I am very glad that I am not at the beginning of my career. It is a task for any singer to make her way in such operas now. When Patti sang first *Lucia* and *Traviata*, the operas were in their bloom, and even the Rossini operas were fresh in the favor of the public. The fate of the light soprano to-day is very different. She has to give these old works all the life they possess, and the other singers have to do the same."

"The composers have evidently no interest in the light soprano as a heroine. Puccini made it possible for her to sing *Mimi* in *La Bohème*, but he has not written another opera for her, but went off into dramatic heroines right away. Yet *Bohème* was the only opera written in years that was possible for her. When will somebody write another?"

learned it in, provided that the language itself is so well suited to singing. "The Mozart rôles that I sang first in German were the *Queen of the Zaire*, *Die Entführung* and the *Entführung aus dem Seraglio*. The parts of *Suzanna* and *Zerlina* I sang first in Italian, at Covent Garden. I once sang *Marguerite* in German, because the direction in Berlin had the idea that it would be delightful to have the opera given entirely in German. She had sung it in German, and I consented and regretted it before I had gone half the way through the opera."

"I have thus sung the same opera in three languages. *Romeo et Juliette* I have also sung in French and Italian. The *Queen in Les Huguenots* I have sung in Italian, French and German. The part of *Brünnhilde* which I have sung more than anything else, I have sung only in Italian. In all the Mozart operas which I have sung, with the exception of *Die Entführung*, I have sung both in Italian and German."

"The most curious experience I ever had with an opera from a linguistic point of view was in the case of *Le Fils du Regiment*, which is usually sung in Italian. I sang the part of *Marie* first in German at Kroll's in Berlin. Then I went to Monte Carlo and sang it there in French."

"I sang it again in Berlin in German and then I went to St. Petersburg, where I sang the part in Russian. I was very much surprised to find that the public did not make much difference, however, what tongue I sang in. The press and public declared that *Marie* was beyond my dignity, and I sang the part only a few times."

## Behind the Veil in Russia

Winter Life on a Country Estate—A Phase of Russian Character Little Known to Foreigners.

In no country in Europe are the conditions of existence more strangely national than in Russia. The idea carried away by the average visitor that Russian life is much like that in other European countries is based on a misconception, a failure to grasp salient features of the Russian national character.

A visit to the country home of a Russian landowner reveals the immense contrast between the life of the Russian noble in town and his more nearly normal existence on his country estate. Nothing shows more clearly the versatility of the Slavonic nature than this ready adaptability to either mode of life. The man seems transformed. Once back in the country the mask of the cosmopolitan dweller in one of the gayest capitals in the world, St. Petersburg, falls away like a worn garment and he is again a Boyar, like his forefathers.

A group of peasants, large and small according to the size of his estate, will be waiting to greet him on his arrival there. Their warm welcome to the khayzeen (master of the house) is evidently sincere, and as they bend reverently to kiss his hands, or possibly his feet in the case of the older ones, just as they would have done in the days of serfdom, you begin to see that the real relations between landowner and peasant are much more friendly than is generally supposed.

Wood is the material employed in the construction of all buildings in the rural districts, with the possible exception of the churches. In the climate of Russia, where the average life of these wooden buildings will not exceed seventy years, there are no castles like those of the old feudal nobles of England or of the Continent to connect past and present.

It is not possible to estimate the loss to Russia caused by the absence of such local centres of cultivation and refinement as would be supplied by castles of stone. Such castles would, no doubt, have checked the drain of national wealth to the capital or to foreign countries. To collect works of art or any articles of intrinsic value and place them in a dwelling which might at any time become a prey to fire, that great Russian terror both in town and country, and which would, in any case, scarcely last more than one lifetime, would surely be the height of folly. Other even stronger reasons to prevent the forming of such collections will be found in the difficulties of transportation and the fact that where the treasure is there will the heart be also.

The heart of the average Russian landowner is not, and never has been, in his country estate. The high personal influence in his own locality, which would, no doubt, have led to the development of a healthier national life than is possible under present conditions, is almost entirely lacking.

The timber built dwellings of even the richest landowners in Russia lack the picturesque construction familiar to travellers in Norway and Sweden. The walls are generally formed of square beams, one foot to eighteen inches in thickness, laid one on the other and neatly joined at the corners. They are fastened together by wooden bolts, sometimes three feet in length, driven at short intervals.

The interiors are made airtight with dried moss, saturated with pitch, then dried in the sun, and the whole is covered with a sheathing of thin planks, on the inside as well as the outside of the walls. When these walls are covered with paint on the outside and plaster within, they are as impenetrable to the winter blasts as the hull of a ship, and far warmer than the same thickness of stone or brick would be.

The old houses have thatched roofs, like those of the peasant's *izba* (cottage), but more modern dwellings are shingled. The rooms are almost always lofty and some of them, notably the drawing room and the dining room, are of a large dimension. The walls are tinted with a wash of some light shade for the drawing and bed rooms, and a darker one, possibly brown, for the dining room. The furniture is simple, very likely home made, or, as is frequently the case of late years, one of the cheaper varieties